

A Brief
HISTORY

OF THE
Memorable Passages and Transactions,
That have attended the
Life, and Untimely Death,
Of the Unfortunate
Sr. John Johnston

Who was Executed at *Tyburn* on the
23th of December, 1690. for Stealing
Mrs. Mary Wharton.

Together with his Behaviour in Prison, and
what he Wrote there touching the Matter
for which he Dyed: With his Pious Ex-
hortations, and Dying Expressions, &c.

With a Short *ELEGY*, written by an Im-
partial hand, upon this Melancholly occasion.

Licensed according to Order.

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HISTORY

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Memorable Passages and Transactions, that have attended the Life and Untimely Death, of the Unfortunate

Sir JOHN JOHNSTON;

Who was Executed at Tyburn on the 23th. of December, for Stealing Mrs. Mary Wharton.

IF we seriously consider the various Circumstances that attend humane Affairs, they cannot but make us conclude, with the Philosopher, That no Man, however prosperous his condition may be in the beginning, or the greatest part of his Life, can be accounted happy, before we see his Latter-end: For no Man can be accounted truly so, how great or promising soever his Affairs may be, till the Conclusion Crowns the Felicity. It happened once, (as we find it in a Credible Author) that a great and powerful Person, admiring in the progress of his many Successes, he was

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never Crossed, Disappointed, or met with the least Misfortune: which made him seriously ponder with himself, (as we may say) to tempt his Destiny; and concluded to cast a precious Ring, which he esteemed above all his Riches, from a Rock into the Sea; to try how Fortune would deal with him on that account; and so it happened, beyond his expectation, that several Fishes being taken for his use, the Ring was found in the Belly of one of them; which seized him with a Melancholly and Conceit, That his Misfortunes when they came, would sit heavy upon him; and so indeed it happened, for he soon after fell by a violent death. Many Stories, undoubtedly real, we might mention of this kind, but not being very pertinent to this affair, what has been said may reasonably suffice; though to make a little further progress of a somewhat different nature: many Persons, before any grand Misfortune has befallen them, have, by an impulse in the Soul, in one manner or other, foreseen it, and perhaps, laboured to shun it one way, when it has unexpectedly fallen out the contrary: But to come nearer.

This unhappy Person, the subject of our Discourse, whose untimely fall has given an occasion of much Talk, was, as far as we can learn, and as indeed appeared in his Conversation, one of a Liberal Education, the Son of considerable Parents; who in his tender years,

years, took care to bring him up in those ways that might make him appear an accomplished Gentleman, and carry some figure in the world, distinguishing him from the Inferiour Rank of Men; not leaving any thing undone that might make him fit for Conversation, or apt to do things worthy of his Birth and Education.

He was by Birth, a Native of Scotland; where indeed Learning (and especially the Latin Tongue) is very much promoted, and encouragement given on that occasion, it being a Language intelligible to most Nations, especially to Travellers, or Men of any parts, rendering Conversation familiar in distant Countries, and amongst people otherwise of various Speech: And although divers Advantages offered in his younger years, yet nothing was so pleasing to him, as a desire to make himself known in the Field of Honour, the thirst of Military Glory filled his breast: and finding no considerable Service offer for the advantage of his own Country, he resolved to make himself known abroad: and having a sufficient Fortune to defray the Charges of such an undertaking, (as being, according to report, no less than a Baronet of the Kingdom of Scotland, and the Second of that Rank, viz. Sir John Johnston of Cascaban :) Nor did his expectations fail him, for he found good Entertainment in Flanders, and other places, behav-

ving himself to like a Gentleman, that he soon
 was taken notice of, and preferred, doing many
 things that rebounded to the gaining him Re-
 spect and Credit: So that being looked upon as
 a fit Person for Service of this kind, he was
 not long without a Command, and did many
 signal Exploits, to the advancement of his
 own Reputation, and the encouragement of
 others: And when he had leasure-times, he
 Travelled to take a Survey of the Country,
 and to inform him in the Manners and Cu-
 stoms of the People; and so he spent a consi-
 derable part of his days, and fortunate had it
 been for him, if he had always Courted Glory
 in the Camp of Mars, and not in an unlucky
 hour, medled with the soft Intrigues of Venus,
 which proved his Ruin: For having now lea-
 sure to be in England with his Company, where
 he behaved himself very Civilly; and we hear
 not of any thing that offered as a blot upon
 him, till a Woman of Chester accused him
 with a Rape, which afterwards he avers, ap-
 peared to be Maliciously suggested, the Woman
 being incited to it, as she said, when it came
 to a true understanding, by her Brother, who
 threatened her with death if she would not Swear
 it; and to avoid his Fury, fled to Ireland; the
 Circumstance of which, appears more at large
 in his Dying Words, though not much perti-
 nent to what we here undertake, than that he
 absolutely denied it with his almost last breath.

Like,

Likewise another Trick of the same nature, he said was put upon him at Utrecht in Holland, where he Quartered.

But to return: He having an opportunity to be in London, and frequenting places where a resort of Gentlemen usually are, amongst others, he had a familiar Acquaintance with one Mr. Montgomery, a Gentleman of considerable Fortune; as also Captain James Campbel, both his Country-men, though that acquaintance proved very unlucky: However, a strict Friendship being knit between them, he was found to be one in the party that Enterprized the carrying away of Mrs. Mary Wharton, Daughter to Phillip Wharton, Esq; Deceased, a Virgin under fourteen years of Age, and an Heiress of 1500 pounds a Year, and above a Thousand pounds in Monies, and other Effects; for which he was Tryed, Cast, and received Sentence at the Old-Baily: But since, having met with a Paper sufficiently testified to be his own Hand-writing, and left as the last Protestations of a Dying-man, we may, as we hope, without giving any offence, insert the Account he gives of the whole matter, as it happened in the many Circumstances that attend this Affair.

Sir, (says he, meaning the Minister to whom he gave or sent the Letter) I think it not amiss, as a Dying-Man, to give you a short Account of all my Innocency, and all the reason they have for bringing me to this untimely End.

On *Fryday* Morning, being the day she was taken away, about Ten of the Clock, Captain *Campbel* and Mr. *Montgomery*, came to my Lodging with a Haunch of Venison: I asked them, what they were going to do? Mr. *Montgomery* told me, it was to Treat Madam *Biarly*, and the rest of the young Ladies; and that he would have Captain *Campbell* Married to one of them this Night; and asked me, if I would go and be a Witness to it. I told him, it must be by consent, or I would have nothing to do with it. He told him, that if he did not procure her Consent, he would not meddle with it; and so we parted, he desiring me to come and meet him at Six of the Clock, at a *Coffee-house* near his Lodging, which I did, and met Captain *Campbel* there; and some time afterwards Mr. *Montgomery* came and called us to the door, and told us, *The Business was done*. About 8 of the Clock, Madam *Biarly's* Coach came by, and they went all away; Captain *Campbel* called a Coach and Six Horses, and bid us go in, and ordered the Coach-man to drive after her Coach, and stop in *Great Queens-Street*.

When she was put into the Coach, (as I'm a Dying-Man, and now receive the *Sacrament*) I could perceive no discomposure in her at all: For after some time spent by Mr. *Campbel* in his Amours, she began to talk of my Lord *Argyle*, and told us, that she had seen some of his Children at *Ham*, and that he was Married to the *Dutchess*

Dutchess of *Lauderdale's* Daughter; and asked him if he were the Second Brother. Upon some Discourse, which I do not well remember, she gave him her Hand, that she would Marry him. This good Humour continued still with her; so that when the Parson desired her to say the words after him, she spake with so Audible a Voice, that the People in the Room heard her louder than the Minister.

After the Ceremony was over, it was observed, that her Wedding-Ring was too Big: Her Husband told her he would change it to morrow: She said, *No, it is not Lucky to Change a Wedding-Ring.* At Supper there was nothing to be observed but an equal Satisfaction between both: When it was asked her, whether she inclined to Bed? She freely consented. The next Morning when we came and asked them how they Rested? She in particuler, answered *Very well.* About 10 of the Clock, Mr. *Montgomery* asked her, if she would go to Mr. *Pontac's* to Dinner? She said, *With all her heart:* Where we went, and stayed till 4 in the Afternoon, and the House full of People. Then we went to our Lodgings, and played at Cards till half an hour after 9; then she went to Bed with all the seeming pleasantness imaginable. This is the Truth, and no more, as I am a Dying-Man; neither truly, was it ever my intention or design, to be a Witness of any thing that would look like a Force; neither indeed, was there any occasion
for

for it, she being so very frank and free of her self to the Marriage. I forgot to tell you, I desired her in the Coach, not to be afraid of any thing, for I told her, there should be nothing of Force imposed upon her, she told me, *she was not at all afraid of that*, she wrote likewise to her Aunt freely a Letter, *Desiring she might not be troubled for her, for she was very well with her Husband Captain Campbel, &c.* And in this he persevered upon his frequent taking the Sacrament; and at the time of Execution, he likewise wrote a Letter, to shew a Christian Temper, wherein he expressed himself heartily, willing freely to forgive those that had injured him, intreating and requesting his Friends to rest satisfied, &c.

During his continuance in Prison after Condemnation, he sent for several Eminent Divines to assist him with Consolation and Comfort, and to prepare him for another World; appearing wholly to set himself about the great Work he had to do, in making sure his Peace for an Eternal Consolation; he was oft in Meditations and Prayers, expressing his own vile-ness and unworthiness, for the Sins he had committed against God through the frailty of Youth, and the corruption of Nature; earnestly begging that he might be thoroughly washed and cleansed in the Blood of Jesus Christ, that so his pollutions being done away, he might
at

at the end of his Life, enter into one more Glorious; and so he continued to wean himself from worldly things, and fix his thoughts upon everlasting Joys, and have his Eyes up to the place whither he hoped he was hastening; he shewed a very even Temper and Disposition, and received the Counsel and Cordial Advice that was given him, with much heed and attention, and made all manner of visible Improvement of it, receiving the Notice, that he must prepare for Execution, with great mildness and less concern, than was expected upon the approach of such melancholy News.

On Tuesday morning about eleven of the Clock, he was put into a Mourning Coach, and followed by a Horse, to bring back the Body; he was attended by two worthy Divines, and was so far from fear of Death, that before he came out of the Prison, he blessed God that his mind was so well satisfied, and by the Grace of God, he was so prepared to dye, that if a Reprieve should come, it would do him an injury rather than a kindness; and when he came to the place of Execution, one of his Friends by the Coach side, told him, That he then came from the King, and no Reprieve could be obtained for him, at which, he did not in the least seem mov'd: being come out of the Coach, and standing in a Cart, he made a very long Speech to the People, mostly relating to the circumstances that attend the unhappy

happy Accident that had occasioned his coming
thither; in all the material Points, agreeing
with what is mentioned in his Letter: And
then came to his Exhortation in these, or as near
as could be taken, like words:

Gentlemen,

I Must now exhort you to be careful for the
Salvation of your own precious Souls:
Gentlemen, He that has been bred a Souldier,
has not perhaps, Lived so strict to the Rules
of Christianity as some other Men. I con-
fess, I have left undone those things which
I ought to have done, and have done those
things which I ought not to have done; but
however, Let me intreat you, that you would
remember your latter end: I pray God that
none of you all may come to an untimely end,
yet remember, that you must come to an end,
your time must have a period. I bless God, my
Life and Conversation has not been so odious
and obnoxious to the World, nor I hope, in
the sight of God, but that I have confidence
in his Mercy; and I hope, that those Di-
vines have been with me, can Justify that
there is nothing that hath come from me, but
what hath proceeded from a True and Pe-
nitent Heart: And I beg, that you would
offer up your Prayers to the Throne of Grace
for me, because no man can say, he does not
want the Prayers of the Righteous, for God
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A short ELEGY, by an impar-
tial Hand, on the untimely
Fall of Sir John Johnston.

What melancholy thoughts should now arise?

*Here sighs suffice not, this requires wet eyes:
Tears are the least of Tribute we can pay,
When in the prime of Life, Life's snatcht away.*

*Al! Johnston, thou art gone, mi fortunes hand,
Has broke the Glass & scatter'd thy frail Sand,
Grim Death, an envy'd Triumph has obtain'd,
A too too early Conquest he has gain'd.*

*O have I seen a blushing Rose look gay,
And scatter'd sweets in Focus's fragrant way?
Then suddenly a blasting Wind bereaves
Her of her Glory, withering her Leaves.*

*What made thee hast to an untimely date?
Was friendship that deserv'd a better fate:
Or here's the Comfort, Heaven perhaps
decreed, (freed.
That you from Earth should this hard way be
Rather*

Rather than by Disase or lingering Pain,
 And in full vigour Storm, the starry plain;
 Break thro' the Azure Battlements by Pr
 The violent by force, ere seated there.

Your Pious End did you a Soldier shew,
 To fight for Heaven, as well as Earth below,
 Gath'ring unenvy'd to the Realm above,
 Ne'er more to fall a Sacrifice to Love.

Love th'er Refined, remains, no better Seed
 Do's mix its Corn to rear a banifal weed;
 That like wild Gouras do's in the Pot grow
 Death. (Great)

To make what should give Life, expel o



Epitaph.

Reader, consider ere you censure pass,
 Tho' Death untimely break this brittle Glass
 (Gla)

Pity at least must make you drop a tear,
 When such Misfortune on Earth's Stage appe
 Say Humane Frailty brought him to his end,
 And in condoling, shew your self a Friend.

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